

Education and development: thirty years of continuity and change

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Introduction

With the Convention on the Rights of the Child as a guiding framework, governments, policy makers, educators, community leaders, parents and children themselves are advancing an education revolution. Their goal - Education For All.

There is a broad vision of education: as a human right and a force for social change; as the single most vital element in combating poverty, empowering women, safe-guarding children from exploitative and hazardous labour and sexual exploitation, promoting human rights and democracy, protecting the environment and controlling population growth. And as a path towards international peace and security. (UNICEF, 1999: foreword)

Whether the call to action comes from international development agencies or from NGOs, the message above is a familiar one: education is central to development.

As an academic field, international education and development has always stood in close relationship to development at both theoretical and practical levels. Emerging out of comparative education, it inherited its progenitor's early belief that education was a key element in modernisation and industrialisation. In its first flowering in after World War Two, it also shared with comparative education a largely positivistic and technicist view of the natures of both knowledge production and national development (cf., Watson, 1988; Crossley, Broadfoot and Schweisfurth, 2007). This strand has remained powerful over the past 50 years, reflecting commonsense views of the education-development relationship; the perceived moral imperative to "make poverty history"; and the dominance of the international development industry over the kind of work that international educationalists do (McGrath, 2001). However, like both comparative education and development studies, to which it is slightly more distantly related, international education has also been powerfully influenced by the emergence of the postmodern and interpretivist traditions in the social sciences, leading to an internal debate within the field about the core relationship between education and development.

How has the debate on education and development changed in the past 30 years? As we have reached the end of the thirtieth volume of IJED, this is a good moment to consider the state of our thinking about the relationship that is central to the journal's focus. This will be a largely introspective look at what can be gleaned from the debates that have occurred in IJED. As this year has also seen IJED reach 1000 papers published there is clearly enough material within the journal to draw upon.

However, I will also turn my gaze outwards to how this large body of literature connects with wider issues in international and comparative education, educational studies and development studies. In so doing, I will be concerned to look forwards as well as backwards, and will conclude with some thoughts about

what the next few years might have in store for the field of education and development and how IJED and its readers might want to position themselves for greater impact.

IJED: the early years, 1981-5¹

IJED began almost 30 years ago in early 1981 with a first issue that contained just four academic papers:

BOX 1: IJED Volume 1 Issue 1

"Progress towards regional targets for universal primary education: A statistical review" by Birger Fredriksen;

"The Addis Ababa conference in retrospect" by A. R. Thompson;

"The impact of the Karachi plan on educational development in Asia—1960–1980" by Keith Watson; and

"Education in Latin America: Aspects and issues in the Mid-twentieth century" by Colin Brock (all 1981).

As can be seen from the titles, there was a deliberate attempt in this very first issue to consider the major international development commitment to universal primary education (UPE) that had come about in the 1960s through a series of UNESCO-convened regional conferences. At Karachi (1960), Addis Ababa (1961) and Tripoli (1966), targets had been set for UPE by 1980 for Asia, Africa and the Arab region respectively; whilst the Santiago Conference of 1962 committed Latin American countries to achieve UPE by 1970. Thus, the papers for this first IJED issue were written at the point when UPE should have been achieved. The papers written by Thompson, Watson and Brock reflect on the limited progress towards UPE in three of the four regions mentioned above, whilst Fredriksen's paper is an attempt to look at the statistical evidence on progress towards the targets. He suggests that the targets, though not attained, may have been useful in encouraging a shift of resources and attention to the issue but notes the limitations that arose from having a regional focus, which did not give enough weight to the complex and diverse contexts within regions. Frederiksen's paper is also notable as the first of many IJED papers that have come from international development agency insiders (cf., Heyneman, 2003; Psacharopoulos, 2006; Hoppers, 2009; Wallenborn, 2009), as he was at the UNESCO Institute of Statistics at the time.

By the end of volume one, IJED had also considered issues regarding school-to-work transitions, migration and the inter-related issues of curriculum, quality and relevance. Taken with the UPE issues, this will be a familiar set of concerns to IJED readers in 2010. The issue of international targets has been a recurrent theme in IJED as first the World Conference on Education for All in 1990 and then the Millennium Development Goals moved the target of UPE back to 2000 and

¹ The early years of IJED have been the subject of two previous articles – Vulliamy (1989) and Watson (1990).

then to 2015. Some of the contributions to IJED in this area naturally reflect the way that research and evaluation funding for international education and development has swung behind the goals. However, there is also much that is critical of the narrowing of the agenda that has resulted (e.g., King, Rose and McGrath, 2007) and/or is questioning of the emphasis on targets (e.g., King and Rose, 2005 and the rest of that special issue, which was entitled "International and National Targets for Education: Help or Hindrance?").

The journal continues to receive a large number of articles concerned with these issues, not least because the British Department for International Development (DfID) has focused its educational research on the three themes of access, quality and outcomes, strands that closely resemble the concerns of IJED's first volume. Indeed, I anticipate that at least a quarter of all articles in IJED between 2010 and 2011 will have come from the three DfID Research Programme Consortia (cf. Crossley and Watson, 2009). My point here is not that DfID, as a bilateral agency, has been able to shape the education for development debate internationally in a significant way. That is probably true and DfID would rightly be pleased in such a finding. Rather, my point is that these themes were selected by DfID precisely because they remain plausible candidates as central themes of the education for development debate. I will return at the end of this paper to the significance of the big research questions appearing, at least superficially, to be the same as they were 30 years ago.

Moving on through the first five years of IJED publications, one can see further familiar themes emerge. There were a number of papers about vocational education and training, for instance. Vocational education and training in 1980 stood at the brink of a major crisis. Although Philip Foster's famous vocational school fallacy argument was already old news, having been published in 1965, the 1980s saw a wealth of research that argued against vocationalised education and post-school public training on grounds of cost, quality and outcomes (e.g., Psacharopoulos, 1987 and 1991; Psacharopolous and Loxley, 1985; Lauglo and Lillis, 1988). With the UPE shift after the 1990 Jomtien Conference, vocational education and training became deeply unfashionable with most international development agencies and there was a significant decline of research in this area, although IJED continued to carry some articles in this area through the 1990s, including powerful critiques of the new orthodoxy by Bennell (e.g., 1996). However, as King, McGrath and Rose (2007) note, the second half of the MDG period has begun with a heightened interest in a broad skills agenda, overlapping with but not contiguous to older vocational education and training debates. This is in part because there is a growing international policy acceptance that skills for work are not an alternative to UPE but a vital element of its achievement. Hence in late 2009, UNESCO identified skills as one of its three education priorities (along with teacher education and literacy) and SADC announced it was developing a new Southern African technical and vocational education and training strategy. Even DfID, one of the most hostile of donors regarding such issues, acknowledged the importance of skills development in its 2009 development White Paper (DfID, 2009). However, it is important that this rediscovery of vocational education does not reflect just another change in fashion but leads to a new approach that can go some way to addressing the critiques produced by authors such as Foster, Middleton and Psacharopoulos.

Issue one also included papers concerned with the role of aid in education. This too has been a recurrent theme of IJED's publications. As was noted above, the constant presence of present and past agency staff amongst the authorship of IJED papers, and, indeed, on its executive and international advisory boards, has helped ensure that the discussion on aid has both been a regular one and one in which there has been a diversity of views. Nowhere has this been more apparent

than in the treatment of the World Bank. On the one hand, IJED has featured hugely valuable reflections by Bank insiders, such as Heyneman (2003) and Psacharopoulos (2006), on the complex interplay of research and policy in the organisation and accounts of particular policies by senior officials, such as Middleton (1988) and Burnett (1996). On the other, it has also included vigorous critiques of the Bank's work by a range of authors, including Bennell (1996), Klees (2002) and Mundy (2002). Furthermore, the Bank has also proved a fertile source for IJED book reviews, with more than 20 Bank publications being commented upon over the years.

Following on from the opening article by Frederiksen, issue one also saw further discussion of the state of educational statistics, an issue returned to in a number of articles over the years (e.g., Heyneman, 1999; Cusso, 2006). As the latter illustrated, more than 25 years after Fredriksen's initial paper, concerns remained about the state of the official statistics gathered by national governments and collated by UNESCO.

More explicit questions about the relationship between education and development also received a consideration in volume 1 (Leftwich, 1982); a theme that continues to resonate through to recent issues (e.g., Tarabini, 2010).

Issue 2/2 was concerned with the challenges of assessment. 2/3 contained papers that addressed issues of politics, equity and cohesion. 3/1 introduced IJED to concerns about teacher and administrator development, including distance learning interventions with teachers, whilst 4/1 saw a first focus on such themes as language of instruction and finance. 4/3 incorporated a first paper on gender issues and 4/4 two papers on disability. In 5/1 the role of computers in education appeared and 5/3 was a special issue on North-South research collaboration.

Many of these themes are apparent in the set of papers published in volume 30. A number of these papers are concerned with the right to quality education and how to achieve and maintain access to such quality provision (e.g., Christie, 2010). These themes are related to a recurrent concern of recent IJED volumes: the limitations and possibilities of learner-centred approaches in resource-poor educational settings (e.g., Sriprakash, 2010). Issues of language and literacy are also quite prominent (e.g., Trudell and Klaas, 2010). Volume 30 also reflects the emergence of China as a donor in education (King; Nordtveit, both forthcoming) and of concerns about HIV/AIDS (Francis, 2010) and environmental sustainability (Bangay and Blum, forthcoming), themes that were not of major importance in IJED's early years.

Plus ça change?

Taking such snapshots of IJED now and then suggests that there are a set of recurrent issues in education and development. However, it is evident too that the discourse has changed in notable ways. Central planning was much more an accepted theme of early IJED papers, whilst the current orthodoxy is one of decentralisation (e.g., Gershberg, Meade and Andersson, 2009). The role of gender has become more apparent; whilst the language regarding disability has shifted markedly from one of writing about the "mentally retarded" and "handicapped" to one of inclusion. Some new issues have also come to the fore, such as the environment, as was noted above, (e.g., Blum, 2008; Nomura, 2009) and post-conflict reconstruction (e.g., Aguilar and Retamal, 2009; Maclure and Denov, 2009).

The very first papers in IJED were broad review pieces of policy documents and official statistics at regional and global levels. However, by issue 2 a diversity of approaches was already evident. Thus, whilst Anderson reviewed a national research literature, Vulliamy (both 1981) presented case studies of two schools. Psychology-derived questionnaires producing descriptive statistics appeared in volume 2 (Ezewu, 1982); followed by the first regression analysis in volume 3 (Loxley, 1983); and the first use of rate of return analysis in volume 4 (Heyneman, 1984). Over time there has been a growth in the frequency and sophistication of the econometric tools used by a range of authors. However, alongside this, there has been the further development of qualitative approaches in which the positionality of the author is accorded considerable importance. Throughout, there has continued to be a concern with the critique of policy, the reanalysis of official statistics and the exploration of case studies.

IJED has long been concerned with questions of who produces knowledge and what knowledge counts. This has led to a range of papers that consider the nature of knowledge production in international education for development (e.g., Preston and Arthur, 1997; McGrath, 2001); the types of research commissioned by international development agencies (e.g., Hoppers, 2001); and the use made of various knowledge sources by agencies (e.g., McGrath and King, 2004). There has also been a strong concern with the possibilities and limitations of North-South research collaboration, as demonstrated by the focusing of an early special issue (5/3) on this issue. Throughout, IJED has sought to balance the need to manage submission quality with a strong drive to include authors writing from developing country perspectives.

The start of IJED was at a point of transition between eras. In the North, the past two years had seen the election of new right wing governments in Britain, America and Germany and a rise in market fundamentalism was also becoming apparent in the development field, particularly in the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, with their development of the new notion of structural adjustment programmes. IJED emerged at a point where much of the optimism of the post-colonial era had dissipated and where the prospects for both education and development seemed uncertain. Although structural adjustment loans from the World Bank have been transformed into Poverty Reduction Strategy Programmes, in many ways the discourse of education for development appears to still be working largely with, or at best seeking to critique, the paradigm of the Washington Consensus rather than breaking out of that debate completely. IJED continues to contain papers that see real merits in the tools and philosophies of the Neoliberal approach, as well as powerful critiques of both the ideology and practices of Neoliberal education reform.

Education as a marginal element of the development discourse

In spite of 30 years' worth of effort by IJED and the much wider outputs in this field, education remains a marginalised element of development thinking (McGrath, 2010, reprising a concern expressed by Watson, 1990). Notwithstanding the quotation with which I opened this paper and the very visible reflection of the education-development link in the two Millennium Development Goals on education, and the widespread policy acceptance of human capital theory in the discourse of the "global knowledge economy", the presence of education in development studies is very minor. A quick scan of the main development studies centres in England, for instance, suggests that far less than 10 of more than 200 staff describe themselves as partly or wholly educationalists. Rather, it is economics that retains pre-eminence in development thinking, not

least because of its continued dominance of the World Bank (King and McGrath, 2004; McGrath, 2010), whilst other disciplines (most notably anthropology) appear far more significant in shaping development thinking than education.

In a recent review of some of the leading new books on development – from Collier (2007), Easterly (2006), Sachs (2008) and Stiglitz (2006), I show that they write very little about education and much of what they do write is questionable from an international education perspective (McGrath, 2010). There are only two references to educational works across these four books and neither of them is from IJED or an international and comparative education journal.

Education is typically something to be mentioned in passing for them. For Easterly, in particular, it is a good thing or as an indicator of development. He celebrates the (incorrect) fact that “Kids enrolled in primary school in the typical poor country went from 65 percent of their age group in 1960 to 100 percent today” (Easterly, 2006: 155-6) as one of the few success stories for aid. Whilst, he does not make such a claim for success already achieved, Sachs does believe that universal primary education is easy to achieve:

Of all of the MDGs, universal access to basic education is surely the easiest to achieve. The technology is the best understood and most straightforward. (Sachs, 2008: 301-2)

He is equally unquestioning in his faith in the impact of ICTs on education:

Distance learning is now ubiquitous in countless informal ways, and will become the standard for much formal education and training as well. Classrooms will go global, with lectures and student participation taking place in several countries simultaneously. (Sachs, 2008: 308)

Sachs is also a strong believer in education’s instrumental and secondary role in population control, accepting without question that improved access to schooling for girls reduces fertility (Sachs, 2008: 187), and the oft-cited link between education and agricultural productivity (Sachs, 2008: 189).

His narrow technocratic sense of education’s role and potential is shared by Easterly, although Collier argues that too much attention has been given to education by the MDGs, dismissing schooling as poorly equipped to be a major vehicle for poverty reduction. Stiglitz is the only one to show even the merest hint of a more nuanced view of education, noting that curricular relevance matters to the effectiveness of human capital investment (Stiglitz, 2006: 51).

In none of these books, or in much of the wider development literature, is there a meaningful sense of the ways that debates in education have addressed the link to development in a complex way. Even if we go back to the first issue of IJED we see concerns from the contributors about the feasibility of international educational targets. There has been concern throughout the history of IJED regarding the purposes of both education and development, and how the two concepts interact. At a more pragmatic level, there has been a plethora of papers that examine the practical limitations of the implementation of the modernisation agenda in international education.

Given the nature of the international political economy of academic knowledge production, it is not at all surprising that the highest-ranking educational journals are dominated by papers from the most developed Anglophone countries. Nor is it unexpected that these journals reflect the policy, practical and theoretical concerns of the developed countries. Indeed, given the current acceleration of academic performativity pressures in these countries, it is likely that the domination of high status journals by developed world scholars will accelerate. For them, it is no longer "publish or perish" but "publish in the very best journals or perish" – with journal quality being apparently objectively judged in terms of metrics such as impact factor. From being discouraged from publishing in Southern journals, then in non-ISI ranked journals, there is increasing talk, in Britain at least, of academics being far more directly told not to aim at lower ranked journals on the ISI list. There is of course, the potential that this might push academics with broader international interests into sharing their existing concerns more often with the audiences of the leading OECD-oriented journals. However, given wider pressures to make research more relevant to domestic governments and the inevitability of even greater competition for publication in the highest ranked journals, there is almost certainly going to be pressure on international and comparative educators in countries such as Britain to shape their research focus in ways that increase their likely attractiveness to the journals that matter.

All we know about positionality and the context specific elements of knowledge suggest that social theories generated about a small portion of global experiences cannot unproblematically be generalised into universal theories of human existence. Thus, an ever-deepening Northern domination of theory production should be of great concern to IJED readers, if indeed this is the trend.

However, in a recent book on development studies, Hettne (2009) offers a far more positive reading. In it he claims that the trends set in place by globalisation necessitate a new "global social theory". He argues that development studies is uniquely well-placed to contribute to this, a point that could easily be expanded to include studies of international education and development / comparative education:

A global social theory should of course be global. This implies that a variety of societal experiences from around the world are taken into account, as well as a pluralist understanding of development goals. The great achievement of development studies has perhaps been to create such a world-wide empirical base for building a global social theory by providing concrete local cases of development and underdevelopment from the world at large, together with varying cultural perspectives on the meaning of development. (Hettne, 2009: 133)

Hettne's argument is attractive in its logic regarding the importance of a theory that is built up rigorously from wide-ranging comparative evidence. However, the challenge lies in engaging with the forces shaping international (i.e., metropolitan) knowledge production in such a way as to open new spaces for wider international evidence to be included more systematically in theory-making.

Future challenges and possibilities

Such a challenge is clearly beyond the scope of IJED to address. Indeed, it may be that IJED should continue on its own path, with considerable interaction with the broader field of international and comparative education but with little meaningful engagement with the mainstreams of either education or development studies. After all, the journal appears to be performing well, both in terms of improving metrics and positive feedback. Indeed, in my interactions with those who know IJED, it is common for them to speak or write of the journal's greatest strength as lying in its refusal to champion a single school of thought, whether in terms of ideological position, methodological approach or stance on the relative merits of theory and practice. Taken with the mix of development insiders and outsiders amongst authors and the annual flow of papers from 20 or more countries, this all serves to make IJED's account of the education-development relationship appropriately complex and fragmentary. Of course this reflects well the current temper of much of international and comparative education work (cf., Mason, 2009; Nordtveit, 2010), and is in tune with longstanding concerns in development studies regarding complex realities and non-linear progress (Long and Long, 1992; Apffel-Marglin and Marglin, 1996).

Nonetheless, it seems worth considering at this point in IJED's evolution whether the journal, and the wider field of international education and development, should be doing more to insert its concerns into mainstream education and development studies debates. IJED and the other international and comparative education journals regularly publish papers that talk back to the imposition in the South of Northern educational policies, such as learner-centred pedagogy, qualifications frameworks, school improvement and leadership development (e.g., Khamis and Sammons, 2007; Chisholm and Leyendecker, 2008; Moloi, Morobe and Urwick, 2008). However, these critiques tend to come from two positions. First, they explore these policies and practices as part of the wider comparative education interest in policy travel or, second, they focus on the contextual factors, typically resources and culture, which prevent the successful implementation of "international best practice" in poorer settings. Rarely, do they raise questions as to whether these "best practices" are an adequate account of the general experience of educational change, or are simply limited special cases that are exceptions to a more general rule. Whilst being mindful of the size of such a challenge, there could be a clearer mandate for IJED in encouraging work that seeks to communicate across existing divides and which builds bridges to other disciplinary and sub-disciplinary islands.

There are signs of possible new education for development paradigms in recent issues of IJED but it is far from certain that any such new paradigm is going to emerge in the foreseeable future. However, at the very least, it does appear that a series of relatively new themes are likely to be more visible within the journal in the next few years. What follows is necessarily a personal and provisional review of some such themes.

In the past five years IJED has seen some work that sits within the human development paradigm and its offshoot of capabilities theory. This approach, of course, emerged from critiques of the human capital underpinnings of the Neoliberal approach and was focused initially on work on the Human Development Index (HDI) at the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Whilst the HDI approach has comfortably been incorporated into a poverty-oriented version of the Neoliberal account, of more radical potential is Sen's subsequent development of the capabilities approach, which seeks to distance personal development somewhat from imposed grand narratives of national development (see Sen, 2009, for the latest development of this

approach). Whilst Sen's approach has been slow to influence education, IJED has seen the first stirrings of an international dimension to this in work in papers by Unterhalter (2005) and Walker et al. (2009), reflecting their larger contribution to linking education, capabilities and social justice (Walker and Unterhalter, 2007). Indeed, a forthcoming IJED special issue, led by Leon Tikly and Angeline Barrett, makes the valuable step of linking these issues to the quality agenda. There are signs too of how human rights discourses are being used in the debate about educational access and quality (e.g., Christie, 2010). Nonetheless, concerns remain that such initially radical discourses are being coopted and domesticated by the major international development agencies, which remain the dominant actors in education for development.

There may also be possibilities for new work on education, religion and development. The World Faiths Development Dialogue, established in 1998 by James Wolfensohn, then World Bank President, appears to be experiencing a renaissance, whilst there has been the more recent emergence of the Tony Blair Faith Foundation, celebrated by a high profile lecture series on Faith and Development hosted by the Royal Society for Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce in Autumn 2009. Renewed academic interest in the topic is best represented by the publication in 2009 of a book on *Religion and Development* by Zed (Deneulin with Bano, 2009), and by DfID's decision to fund a five year programme on Religion and Development, based at the University of Birmingham.

There are signs of education-development studies collaboration in this area through a human development and capabilities lens. This is not that surprising as some of the key capabilities theorists have a religious orientation. Equally, as I noted recently (McGrath, 2010), there are strong antecedents of human development discourse in the famous papal encyclical, *Populorum Progressio* (Paul VI, 1967) and similar thinking is clearly present in the major recent encyclical, *Caritas in Veritate* (Benedict XVI, 2009). There is a long-standing and complex relationship between religion and education, and much formal (and non-formal) education in poorer countries remains in the hands of religious bodies. This is a growing interest of international education scholars. A recent book by Dasen and Akkari (2008) contains chapters on Buddhist, Hindu and Voodoo education, whilst the *International Handbook of Catholic Education* (Grace and O'Keefe, 2007) considers a global system of education that includes more than 120 000 schools. Recent IJED papers question some of the negative accounts of the role of madrassas in education and development in Pakistan (Cockcroft et al, 2009; McClure, 2009). Finally, *Comparative Education* has a special issue on religion and comparative education currently in development. Given the accepted role of education in religious models of development, it may be relatively easy to make cross-disciplinary bridges on this topic.

Global developments since the 9/11 have seen issues of security become more prevalent in the development literature (e.g., Roberts, 2007; Hettne, 2009). Fear of international terrorism has spawned a growing policy and academic literature on failed states (e.g., Bates, 2008). As Novelli (forthcoming) notes, this security agenda significantly impacts upon the education-development relationship. It raises very difficult questions about the increased interlinking of humanitarian provision, regular aid to education and a specific focus on education for peace and against conflict. Indeed, as Novelli notes, the increased difficulty of separating these strands can come with very serious, even fatal, costs to those working to promote education and development. Moreover, many of the IJED readership will be acutely aware that whilst education may be used to promote peace; it is often used to support conflict and violences of multiple kinds (e.g., Harber, 2008).

The recent return of vocational education to the development policy agenda has already been noted and it is possible that this might be related to a wider return to concerns about capacity development, particularly in Africa and in small states. This, of course, is an issue that was very prominent in the 1960s due to the decolonisation wave but did receive another airing in some international development policy circles in the past few years, most notably from UNDP but also in the British and Danish Commissions for Africa and recent Commonwealth thinking about development in its smaller member states. Noticeably, capacity development is the only educational issue to receive any attention in Collier's highly influential *The Bottom Billion* (2007).

It may be that this issue could be broadened out from its traditionally narrow focus on state capacity as policymakers try to combine concerns with expansion of higher education with continued commitments to poverty reduction. Thus, we may see the growth of a new interest in professional education in poorer countries, as seen, for instance, in Walker et al's work on pro-poor professionalism in South Africa (Walker et al., 2009), work by Breier, Wildschut and Mgqolazana (2009) on nursing education (also in South Africa) and the ongoing collaboration between UNESCO, WHO and the International Pharmaceutical Federation to revitalise pharmacy education in Africa.

Finally, and most speculatively, there are widespread claims that the neoclassical orthodoxy in economics is unsustainable. As this is at the theoretical and ideological heart of development studies, any collapse of this orthodoxy clearly would have implications for work on education-for-development. The challenges to neoclassical economics come from a range of directions. The current global depression has led to a questioning of the theory's value and a heightened interest in Keynesian alternatives, in ways that at least superficially mirror the shift away from Keynesianism during the economic crisis of the 1970s. Economic orthodoxy has continued to be threatened by developments in the sciences, most notably from complexity approaches in physics and the emergence of the new neuroscience. Whilst the former cuts away at the scientific ambitions of economics, the latter questions the core rationality assumption of neoclassical economics through some of the new findings of behavioural economics. At the same time, there is renewed criticism from within the economics profession regarding its unwillingness to understand the limits of economic analysis and to engage seriously with other perspectives. Such critiques come both from Nobel laureates (Sen and Stiglitz) and more radical elements (e.g., Fulbrook, 2008). Whilst it is difficult to see if this range of challenges will only be temporary, it is possible that new opportunities will arise for educational interactions with either a new orthodoxy or a new pluralism in economics.

Of course, it is likely that any such developments in IJED's coverage will be balanced for the foreseeable future with work within established education-for-development tropes, drawing on quantitative approaches to large data sets; evaluation studies of specific interventions; ethnographically-inspired explorations of cultures and practices; and critical accounts of national and international policies.

Conclusion

In seeking to move the field of international education and development forward and, in particular, to engage more widely with diverse constituencies, it will be important to consider whether it is of importance that many of the issues facing education and development appear to be little changed from 30 years ago when

IJED began. Does it matter that we still think that we know relatively little about some of the key relationships involved? Is our field actually developing or is it spending too much time layering new cases onto our existing knowledge base rather than seeking to break significantly new ground? Do the new themes that have emerged in the field in the past 30 years reflect genuine new insights or are they governed too much by shifting donor fashions or a superficial donning of the trappings of current theories without a rigorous attempt to relate these to the existing base of theory and knowledge?

IJED began 30 years ago with a series of articles reflecting on the failure to meet universal primary education targets. If we move forward to the immediate aftermath of 2015 and the culmination of the MDG phase, will we be caught in another cycle of reflections on why another set of targets failed followed by a research agenda that has been powerfully shaped by the next round of targets and the priorities that the international policy community believe flow from these? Writing at a time of economic recession, such "business as usual" may seem quite comforting as opposed to no business at all. However, it seems to me that the challenge for IJED and for the wider work of its readership is to start imagining a more radical future in which we seek more purposefully to build bridges with other disciplines, engage with new methodological tools and encourage fresh voices but above all else communicate more clearly what we do and don't know about the wonderful complexity of the education-development relationship.

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